

A Resource Guide to Parenting During a Pandemic

By

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What a strange world we are living in right now as we all prepare to manage our families in a pandemic. These are uncertain times which can be disorienting for both ourselves and our kids.

In times like these we need to root ourselves in what is certain and that is the love you have for your kids, your family and your community. Start there as you make sense of our current world.

There is no handbook for parenting during a pandemic. Be gentle with yourselves and your little people. Your kids may be out of school for weeks. Spring break trips have been canceled. Your income may be vulnerable. Your most intimate interactions will change. But we will get through this, together.

Look for the beauty. Neighbors helping each other. Schools providing food for the community. Organizations offering child care for health care workers. Extra cuddle time with our people. Be prepared, be proactive, play your part in stopping this pandemic and find the beauty.

Our thoughts have energy. Choose them wisely!

As a homeschooler, an avid researcher and someone who is slowly healing herself from chronic illness. I thought the best way I could help, would be to create a list of resources to support you and your beautiful families as you navigate this pandemic. I hope you find some nuggets in this resource and know that I am showering you all with love, gratitude and good thoughts.

Social Distance not Social Disconnection

Social distance will save lives. The evidence is unquestionable. I am grateful to live in a state where the leadership recognizes this. But social distance does not mean social disconnection. Connect with your family, friends and loved ones. Text, call, Facetime, Duo, Zoom, etc.

Tell them a funny story from your day at home with the kids. Have a virtual dance party with cousins in another state. Check in with friends/family. Ask them what they need. Have them read a picture book or tell a story to your kids so you can grab 5 minutes to yourself. Create on-line gatherings. Stay connected, virtually!

Stock up on Compassion

We've seen the toilet paper craze. How about the compassion craze? Let's stock up on this beauty. Have compassion for yourself, your partner, your kids. For the teachers as they figure out how to do their job virtually. For the health care workers who are on the front lines! For your kids who are missing their friends. For the small businesses in our communities who are struggling.

For the families that don't have backup childcare. For the families who depend on school to feed their kids breakfast and lunch. For the elderly neighbor who already feels isolated. For you who are balancing working from home and homeschooling your kids. Meet each moment of the pandemic with compassion.

Awareness Around your Emotions

Feel it! Feel all the waves of emotions that are flowing through you. The fear, disappointment, worry, anxiousness, etc. The joy of a forced slow down in what is a normally chaotic life. Just be aware of these emotions around your kids. Emotions are contagious. You may have the self-regulation to feel panic and move through it but your little one doesn't. They will soak up your anxiety and worry.

Be conscious of when and how you talk about what's happening in the world around your little people. Yes, talk to them about what's happening in an age appropriate way, but monitor how much 'extra talk' they are being exposed to.

Go Outside

Nature is our greatest salve. Children know this intuitively but often as adults we need to be reminded of this. Go outside, embrace nature. Lay on the grass, look up at the sky. Make cloud animals with your kids. Go for hikes. Prep your garden for spring planting.

Fill the bird feeder. Dig in the dirt with your little people. Breathe the fresh air. Marvel at the signs of spring. Be in awe of the natural world. See it through your kid's eyes. Ground in the earth's energy.

Take the Opportunity

There are opportunities woven throughout our new reality. Look for them, embrace them. What can we learn from this pandemic beyond the obvious? What does this universal mandate for slow living have to teach us as global citizens and as parents? Take the opportunity to do a values clarification. To challenge your pre-pandemic perspective. To slow down and reflect on what really matters.

To create new rituals with your kids. To savor the slow morning starts rather than the rush of getting to the car line or the bus stop. Start your morning with a dance party and cuddle, rather than the frantic search for the one pair of socks your kid will wear as you are rushing out of the house. Build forts. Jump on the trampoline. Make up stories. Eat breakfast in costumes. Be with your kids.

Take this opportunity to rethink how you can work. Perhaps telecommuting on certain days of the week could become a new normal. Or more use of digital avenues could be immersed into your work. Work on that on-line class you have always wanted to offer.

It is not lost on me that the parents in our community who are health care providers, may not be experiencing this slow living. And to you all I want to share our gratitude for all you do. We will keep each and everyone of you in our thoughts!!

Balance Informed vs. Overwhelm

Knowledge is power and information saves lives! And in our 24/7 world of easy access to information we can start the slide from informed to overwhelm. I know this firsthand. It is an occupational hazard of us avid researchers. Balance being informed with being overwhelmed.

Limit your time on-line. Set a timer if you must. Ask your partner to hold you accountable. Turn the news off after a set time. Don't watch it right before bed. Yes, be informed! But don't let it become overwhelming.

If we are overwhelmed, then our kids will become overwhelmed. Viruses are not the only contagion. Our emotions, too, are contagious.

Practice Self-Care

Easier said than done, I know! Self-care is something we should always strive for as parents and now more so than ever. It is important that during times like these we tend to our emotional and mental well-being.

Utilize stress-lowering tools that work for you so that your nervous system and immune system are balanced. Exercise, meditate, take a bath, do art, call up your funniest friend and savor the laughter. Role model for your kids active self-care. Self-care will allow you to parent from your best self!

Immune Health for You and Your Kids

Along with social distancing we should be proactive with supporting our immune systems and those of our kiddos. I find in times like this it is comforting to feel some control. And the choices we make regarding our lifestyle is a great place to feel this control. Especially since it sets our families up for strong immune systems.

This is a great opportunity to teach your kids about their immune systems. And what they can do to be a friend to their immune system just like their immune system is a friend to them.

Prioritize Sleep

Make sure that both you and your kids are getting quality sleep. Sleep resets our entire system and provides an avenue through which we can relieve stress and maximize our immune response.

Quality sleep, consistently, is one of the best ways our immune system defends us against viruses, disease and infection. Aim to get between 7 to 8 hours. Extra points if you are asleep by 10 p.m.

Eat Healthy

Fill your family's bowls with lots of vegetables and fruit. Healthy eating directly affects the quality of your immune system. It affects your emotional and mental state as well.

Plants and fruits are full of nutrients that not only help us stay well day-to-day but also act as one of the best defenders against chronic disease. Eat in service to your body!

Cook with immune boosting herbs like ginger, garlic, thyme, rosemary, turmeric and oregano.

Try not to eat sugar, dairy and eggs. These foods feed viruses. If that seems too difficult then at the very least cut back on them. And keep in mind alcohol suppresses the immune system.

Hydrate

Water helps to carry oxygen to our cells, which results in a properly functioning system. It also works in removing toxins from the body, so drinking more of it could help prevent toxins from building up and having a negative impact on your immune system.

It also helps our body to naturally eliminate bacteria that may cause illness. Not to mention dehydration makes us irritable. And nobody needs irritability during a pandemic.

It can be challenging to keep our kids hydrated. Get creative. Have tea parties with them. Play “cheers”. Have them come up with different fruits and vegetables they can put in the water to flavor it. Create a “hydration log” that they color in after each 8 oz drink.

Move your Body

Exercise and movement is vital to maintaining optimal health. And for me it is my greatest stress reducer. Model healthy movement for your kids.

With schools going virtual it can become a slippery slope into inactivity. As a homeschooling family we celebrate completed lessons with epic dance parties. Dance is an amazing form of exercise. We have burpee and squat challenges during the school day as well. See who can finish up the school day with the most squats or push ups. Get them out on the trail. Go for hikes. Do yoga. Move!

Manage Stress

When we're stressed, the immune system's ability to fight off antigens is reduced. That is why we are more susceptible to infections. The stress hormone corticosteroid can suppress the effectiveness of the immune system.

It is imperative during this stressful time that you engage in healthy stress reductions. This goes for your sweet kiddos as well. Meditate. Do yoga. Take a bath. Call a friend. Turn off the news. Watch a comedy cuddled up with your kids. Go for a hike. Hug a tree. Work in your garden. Whatever is your stress reduction, do it!!

Supplements and Herbs to Support a Healthy Immune System

Because of my chronic illness I have a compromised immune system. I would get sick all the time and was told by doctors it was my 'new normal'. I did not accept this and armed with my research skills and overwhelming desire to regain health, I have learned a ton about what supplements can support our immune systems.

Below I share with you, after many years of trial and error, the ones that I love, and have found to keep me healthy. Healthy is my new normal! I want to share these all with you, so you can maximize your immune system during this pandemic.

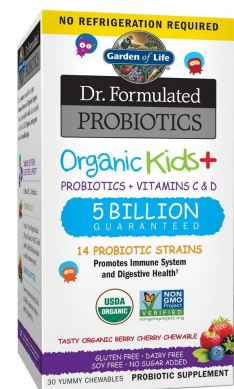
Please know that I am not a medical professional and as such my suggestions below are just that - suggestions. They are not intended to take the place of medical advice or treatment from a personal physician.

As always you are advised to consult your doctor or qualified health practitioner regarding specific health questions, especially related to the recommended supplements below.

Please note: Some of the recommendations may contain affiliate links.

1. Probiotics

The good bacteria in your gut are known as probiotics and are responsible for supporting digestion, combating harmful organisms, and keeping your



immune system in check. Considering that 70 percent of your immune system resides in your gut, maintaining a balance of probiotic bacteria is essential for nurturing your immune defenses. Probiotic-rich foods like kombucha, sauerkraut, and kefir, or a high-quality, probiotic supplement can help balance your ratio of good to bad bacteria.

For my girls I use [these organic kids probiotics](#). I like that they are shelf stable and I do not have to worry about refrigerating them. They are great for travel. And my girls like the flavor.

For my husband and I [we like these](#).



I also like these [women specific ones](#).

2. Vitamin D3

The sunshine vitamin is another nutrient that keeps your immune system strong. In my opinion it is one of the greatest supplements we can take to support our immune system. In fact, vitamin D deficiency has been directly linked to a compromised immune system. Exposure to sunlight is the best way to encourage your body to produce vitamin D, but it's not always accessible.

I am a firm believer in my girls getting their Vitamin D from the sun but that is not always possible. Vitamin D supplementation is an easy way to fill the gaps. I choose vitamin D3 over vitamin D2 as it is more bioavailable.



Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin. And because of that you have to watch your dosages, especially with your kids. Be careful not to give them too much!

[Above is the Vitamin D3 for kids supplement](#) I use for my girls.

[This is the Thorne Vitamin D3 supplement](#) I use.



3. Cat's Claw

I love this stuff! It is one of the most powerful antivirals on the planet. It's antiviral compounds are highly complex and pathogens such as viruses cannot become immune to these phytochemical compounds. To learn more about this powerful herb [check out this article](#). [This is the Cat's Claw brand](#) we use and love

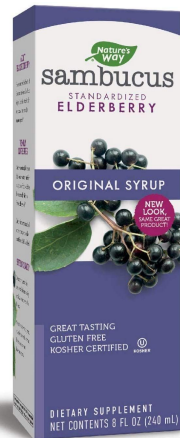


4. Elderberry Syrup

Another fan favorite. Elderberries contain special proteins and bioflavonoids that have the ability to destroy viruses on contact that infect cells in the body. Elderberries are also known to have the ability to significantly enhance immune function by boosting the production of cytokines in the body.

In addition, they are very beneficial for bronchial and respiratory problems and can help loosen and expel congestion in the lungs.

Elderberry syrup is also rich in vitamin C and a wealth of other critical vitamins. We make our own as it is way more cost effective. And you can add in extras like ginger, cloves and cinnamon.



There has been some discussion around COVID-19 that with the use of anti-inflammatories there is a potential over reaction of the immune system aka 'cytokine storm' making remedies like elderberry syrup potentially contraindicated.

From what I have read, Elderberry remains a powerful immune booster for people not displaying symptoms of COVID-19. If at some point you do start displaying symptoms or test positive discontinue use until you are able to speak with your doctors.

If I didn't make my own, [Sambucus is the one I would use](#).

5. Zinc

Zinc feeds the immune system, providing it with one of the most critical trace minerals for the immune system to function optimally. Most everyone is deficient. Zinc also slows down viruses on its own merit.

Viruses are allergic to zinc; the mineral repels and weakens them, even making pathogens docile, which allows the immune system to kill off and eliminate the pathogens more quickly.

My favorite is [liquid Zinc Sulfate](#).

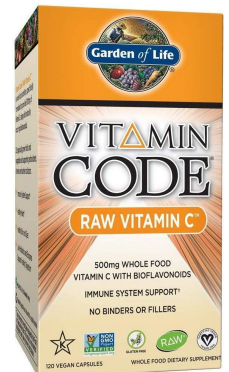


6. Vitamin C

I know Vitamin C is a no brainer but I believe it is still worth mentioning. Vitamin C is an antioxidant that feeds our immune system. And our adrenals. Also, the viruses that are responsible for symptoms and conditions are highly allergic and sensitive to Vitamin C.

While protecting our own cells from oxidation, Vitamin C, has the ability to oxidize a pathogen, causing it to become injured, break down, and disperses.

I like to get my Vitamin C through a liposomal delivery system as it bypasses the GI tract. When I can't get my liposomal Vitamin C [I use this one](#).



I like it because it has the bioflavonoids that you need to maximize the absorption of Vitamin C.

7. Colloidal Silver

Colloidal silver is one of the most well scientifically supported natural antiviral, antibacterial, and antifungal agents, with immune-boosting properties. Research suggests that it attaches to proteins on the cell walls of bacteria, damaging their cell membranes.

Pathogens are water-soluble, but healthy cells and good bacteria are surrounded by a fat-soluble layer. Colloidal silver therefore selectively



targets pathogens, since it cannot penetrate the fat-soluble layer of your healthy cells and microbes.

Colloidal Silver cannot be taken orally every day. Because of this, we save it for when we feel the first signs of illness approaching. I have had just the beginning of a sore throat before and then started on Colloidal Silver and my impending cold was stopped in its tracks.

What we are doing now during this pandemic, is spraying up our noses with Colloidal Silver any time we have to leave the house. Viruses often enter through our noses and by spraying with Colloidal Silver I know these viruses will be killed on contact.

[This is the Colloidal Silver](#) we use.

Other Supports for a Healthy Home/Healthy Body

1. Essential Oils

We are big fans of diffusing essential oils in our home. Lavender at night for the girls if they are having a hard time relaxing. Eucalyptus if they have a stuffy nose. And during a time like this we diffuse [Plant Therapy's Germ Fighter Synergy essential oil](#).



We have a few diffusers throughout the house. [My favorite diffuser is this one](#).



2. Genexa

If we ever do find ourselves battling a cold or the flu we always turn to Genexa. I love this company and their mission, “Clean Medicine Without the Junk”. It was started by two dads looking for safer, organic medicine for their families and couldn’t find any.

All Genexa medicine is Organic, Non GMO, free of dyes, preservatives and synthetic or chemical ingredients. Their remedies improve symptoms and shorten the duration of a cold or flu.



For a cold - [I use this one \(pictured above\) for myself and my husband](#)

For my daughters - [I use this children's version.](#)



For the Flu - [I use this Flu fix one.](#)



Home with the Kids - Resources for Homeschooling

As many of you know we have been homeschooling our girls this year. And I wanted to share with you all the resources that I have found along our journey that may be helpful for you during this time. As well as some of our learning with our first year of homeschooling.

Routine - We are most productive and centered when we have a routine. And this is especially true of our kids. We need to remember that our kids come from routines. A classroom thrives on routine and your kids have come to expect that. Create a routine with your kids. Get their input. Write it up. Place it in a central location and stick to it. Make sure there are lots of opportunities for free play, fun, creativity and physical activity in your routine.

Accountability - Holding your kids accountable to the learning can be challenging. Have a conversation with your kiddos about what accountability will look like. Get their ideas. Co-create an assignment check off sheet. Ours is a weekly check off sheet. Each day of the week (Monday through Friday) is on the sheet with all of their subjects. They check off as they go which they love. And it helps them monitor their own accountability.

If they get all their work done, then they have a Freestyle Friday which is a fun day of learning. They sleep in. Play in the morning. We might bake or sew. Or go for a long hike. Or have Poetry Teatime. They see it as a celebration of their hard work from the week and it can be a motivator to get all their work done Monday through Thursday.

Diversify the Learning Environment - Learning does not have to always take place at the kitchen table or their desks. Sure, certain subjects are best done in such a place like handwriting, keyboarding, cursive, etc. But lots of subjects can be done elsewhere.

I find this approach can really help with potential apathy. For example, the other day it was so nice out that we did “Camping Homeschool”. My husband started a fire while I worked with the girls near by at our picnic table. They were being resistant with math but once we moved it outside, next to the campfire they loved it.

We pretended that we were a “wild family” that lived in the woods and homeschooled. And the math lesson and worksheets were done between giggles and statements of, “It’s so nice outside”. And my most favorite place to read with my girls is bundled up under blankets in our hammock.

Brain Breaks - Take lots of brain breaks. Dance parties. Trampoline jumping. Burpees. Petting the dog. Playing in the mud kitchen. Do it! Take the brain breaks so that when they come back to the work they are refreshed and ready to go.

Giving Yourself a Break - As the teacher, parent, home manager. you will want to find opportunities where you can take a breather and your kids are still learning. Both my husband and I share homeschooling and still run our businesses.

We have found podcasts, books on tape and educational screen time to be very helpful. It allows you to tap out, breath, return a work email, return a work phone call, etc and your kids are still “in school”. Below are some of my favorite resources for this:

Podcasts for Kids

Brains On! Science

The Big Life Kids Podcast

Bedtime History (Great before bed as well)

Stories Podcast

But Why: A Podcast for Curious Kids

Educational Screen Time

1. Historical Movies - [Here is a great list](#)

2. Doodling with Author and Illustrator Mo Willems - The creator of The Pigeon series and Knuffle Bunny is doing a Lunch Doodle where he teaches your kids to doodle. You can [access it here](#)

3. BrainPop - Love BrainPop and they are offering free memberships for those families who are out of school due to the pandemic. [Check them out here](#)

4. Outschool - We have taken a few classes with Outschool and really liked them. They are a platform for thousands of teachers to post classes. So any possible topic you want to learn they have a class. Check them out at www.outschool.com.

5. Virtual Museums - Google Arts & Culture teamed up with over 2500 museums and galleries around the world to bring anyone and everyone virtual tours and online exhibits of some of the most famous museums around the world. [You can access them here](#),

6. Visit a Zoo - Watch the live cams at the [San Diego Zoo](#) and the [Georgia Aquarium](#).

7. Explore the National Parks - You can travel, virtually, through the trails of [Yellowstone](#) and [Yosemite](#).

8. Cosmic Kids Yoga- My girls love Jaimie and all of her fun yoga adventures. She is the absolute best! Your kids will get the benefit of a workout, relaxation and story telling all wrapped into one. [Check out her Youtube videos here](#).

9. Calm App, is offering free resources to support our mental and emotional well being through this time. They are meditations, stories, music and they even have a kid's Calm. [Click here to check out all](#) of the Calm goodness.

10. The Libby App- The girls and I discovered the Libby App in an effort to save money and forgo the expense of Audible. It is a free app that allows you to access audiobooks from the library. We just finished listening to "Fish in a Tree" which was awesome! We listen to books while I cook dinner and they color at the kitchen table. It is a lovely time for me to have some space while still being together, if you know what I mean. Then after dinner we discuss what we have listened to.

Other Resources for Navigating the Pandemic

- 1. How To Talk With Your Kids About Coronavirus** - a video interview with child psychologist Dawn Huebner by Dr. Song. [Click here to watch](#)
- 2. How to Talk with Your Kids About Coronavirus Blog Post** - by Dr. Huebner and Dr. Song. [You can check it out here.](#)
- 3. Handwashing and Coronavirus. Are you doing it the right way?**- Blog post by Dr. Song. [You can read it here.](#)
- 4. “Troubling Times: Anxiety Rising, Schools Closing, and Way More Time at Home With The Kids.”** [A five-part audio series](#) by Simplicity Parenting offering the following episodes:
 1. “Preparing” - How to speak to our kids and how to stay centered so our kids can co-regulate with us.
 2. “Signaling Security via Decluttering” - When the world feels like it is in chaos and closing in, creating a decluttered space is like soul arnica.
 3. “Wrapping Warm Rhythm Around Our Children” - When so much is changing and shifting, how do we strengthen predictability and the feeling that all is well in our family’s world.
 4. “Dialing Back Schedules in Preparation and Decisions Afterwards” - How to walk children and teens off their busy lives in preparing for the cancellations of school and after school activities, and the opportunity it offers when life gets back to normal.
 5. “Filtering Adult Information is More Important Now Than Before” - With so much scary information out there, how can we keep our kids informed in the right way for their age?
[To listen click here!](#)

Alright my amazing community of beautiful parents. Wishing you so much love, light and peace as we all navigate this pandemic. Together we will get through this! I hope you find this resource helpful! Big virtual hugs to all of you!!

Cheers,

Beth